

Unfortunately, the 200-year old town hall was destroyed in a horrendous fire in December of 1995. The new Town Hall, which was dedicated on July 11, 1998, stands as a testament to the courage and character of the 2,300 residents of this wonderful town. I want to acknowledge this town and its residents as they celebrate their new Town Hall as well as their 215th anniversary.

TRIBUTE TO MR. PAT PATTON

HON. CIRO D. RODRIGUEZ

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 16, 1998

Mr. RODRIGUEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to a gentleman who has endeared himself to the cause of equality and justice in Northern Ireland and distinguished himself as a community leader in Texas. Pat Patton has served in many capacities, both professionally and as a volunteer, for his community. As the Executive Director of the Ancient Order of the Hibernians, he worked diligently and effectively at seeking recognition of inequalities in Northern Ireland.

Before assuming that position, Mr. Patton played an instrumental role in the Irish community throughout Texas. He produced and hosted a weekly radio show in Houston called "Irish Aires." In 1991, I had the privilege of working with Mr. Patton as he spearheaded the lobbying effort to pass the MacBride Principles in the Texas Legislature. His tireless efforts over a period of two legislative sessions ultimately succeeded. To this day, this law dictates principles of fairness and equality within companies in Northern Ireland in which the State of Texas owns shares. For these and other efforts, Mr. Patton, on July 21, will be honored at the National Convention of the Ancient Order of the Hibernians in Pittsburgh, PA.

By profession, Mr. Patton is a social worker, having completed his undergraduate degree from St. Mary's University in San Antonio, which is my alma mater. As a social worker myself, I am aware of the sacrifices and patience required in this profession. After receiving his Masters of Social Work (MSW) from Tulane University in New Orleans, he provided counseling for the US Air Force. He continued his services at Catholic Charities in Los Angeles where he served as a therapist and family marriage counselor. Later, he moved back to Texas where he continued serving those less fortunate as Vice President of Houston Light-house for the Blind.

I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing the selfless devotion of Mr. Patton to his community and his country. We owe him, his wife Mary, and their family, our debt of gratitude.

THE SMALL BUSINESS EMPLOYEE RETIREMENT PROTECTION ACT OF 1998

HON. SAM GEJDENSON

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 16, 1998

Mr. GEJDENSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce the Small Business Employee Re-

tirement Protection Act of 1998. This legislation will bring security to millions of small business employees in Connecticut and throughout the nation.

Mr. Speaker, I wrote this legislation in part because of a problem in my district. Late last year, we in eastern Connecticut learned just how vulnerable pension plans are. The employees of Emergi-Lite, a small manufacturing business in Westbrook, Connecticut, were informed that their plan was basically bankrupt. An unscrupulous, unqualified manager embezzled about \$2 million—nearly all the assets in the plan. The employees had no idea their life savings were being squandered. They had no information about the total value of the plan or how the total value of the plan or how the assets were being invested. They were left in the dark and almost robbed blind.

The bill I introduce today will reduce the chances that what happened at Emergi-Lite will happen again. This legislation requires pensions to be managed by qualified professionals, such as a bank or mutual fund company. Moreover, it requires plan managers to provide beneficiaries with information about total asset value and how funds are invested. Passage of this bill will ensure that people working for small businesses will know where their hand-earned dollars are going. They deserve nothing less.

If enacted into law, the Small Business Employee Retirement Protection Act will ensure that this sort of tragic loss of retirement savings does not happen again by requiring that pension assets be held in a bank or other qualified financial institution. In addition, the bill would give employees the right to find out the status of their plan's assets and would require that plans inform participants of that right.

I am happy to introduce this legislation with my five colleagues from Connecticut: Ms. DELAUNO, who also represents many of the affected employees, Mrs. KENNELLY, Mrs. JOHNSON, Mr. SHAYS, and Mr. MALONEY. All of us were disturbed about what happened in Westbrook. This is an example of how our delegation works together to support common-sense legislation that will really make a difference for people across our region.

TRIBUTE TO CHARLES EDWIN SKIDMORE—"CHAMPION FOR WEST VIRGINIA'S VETERANS"

HON. NICK J. RAHALL II

OF WEST VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 16, 1998

Mr. RAHALL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my deepest condolences to the family of Charles Edwin Skidmore of Hinton, West Virginia, who died on May 31, 1998 after a long battle with cancer.

I also rise in tribute to Charles Skidmore and his lifelong commitment to disabled Veterans.

Charles was the Commander of the Disabled Veterans in Hinton, West Virginia at his death, but had previously served two terms as State Commander of the West Virginia Disabled American Veterans, and was still active as a volunteer at the Beckley, West Virginia Veterans Hospital up until his death.

Even though Charles was very ill during the last year of his life, he still fulfilled all his commitments.

Charles Skidmore was vice president of the Southern West Virginia Veterans Museum, and served on the committee for the Restwood Veterans Memorial where he was instrumental in its design and completion.

A lifelong member of the American Legion Post #29 in Elkins, and a life member and local commander of the DAV in Hinton, Charles was also deeply involved in "Respect the Flag" program with local area schools.

A retired Postal worker for the Beckley Post Office, Mr. Skidmore was also a former railway clerk in Hinton, West Virginia where he was born and where he lived all of his life.

Charles Skidmore is survived by his wife Rosalyn, three sons and three daughters, 16 grandchildren and six great-grandchildren. I am confident that his wife, and his sons and daughters will carry on his commitments to local Veterans programs and to his community in the years to come.

Charles Skidmore will be sorely missed by Veterans at the Beckley VA Hospital, where they could count on his presence, where they could tell him of their problems and get his advice on how to solve them. Veterans in the Beckley-Hilton area knew they could always count on him to actively fight for their right to adequate and appropriate health care services at the local, State and National levels.

I last saw Charles at a dinner in May, shortly before he died, where we spoke briefly concerning veterans affairs, and where he introduced me to his wife, his daughter Sharon and his grandchildren. He was a proud husband, father and grandfather, who set a shining example of compassion and caring, trustworthiness, honesty and good citizenship for them and for his community.

Mr. Skidmore was buried with full military honors in the Restwood Memorial Gardens in Hinton, a place he helped design, build and dedicate as a fitting burial site for other Veterans.

CUTS IN SUMMER YOUTH EMPLOYMENT FUNDING

HON. HAROLD E. FORD, JR.

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 16, 1998

Mr. FORD. Mr. Speaker, Each of the last two years, Mr. Speaker, I have witnessed over 5,000 young people in my district stand in line for the chance to apply for a summer job. And unfortunately, each year, at least 3,000 of these young people have been turned away because of a lack of resources—despite \$2.8 million of federal funding per/year and local government and private sector support.

So instead of waking-up each morning for eight weeks out of the summer and being exposed to the rigors, habits, and rewards of work, thousands of young people in my district—mostly 15, 16, and 17 years olds—have had little more to do than hang-out on the streets looking for ways to keep themselves entertained and occupied.

So I rise today, Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the thousands of young people in my district and countless others across America, to express my deep concern and frustration over the decision last week by the Labor/HHS Appropriations Subcommittee to report-out a bill that will, among other things, eliminate \$871